



WINIFRED & LESLIE TOWNSEND

Getting to Know Your Neighbours - No.7

Leslie and Winifred Townsend celebrated their Golden Wedding 2 years ago. Their first home was at Taynton but later they came to live among their numerous relations at Fifield and have been there ever since. Winifred kept the Post Office shop for 12 years, while Leslie worked as a stone-mason.

One of the fine houses he worked on was Burford Priory, where his creation - a fine balustrade of Bath stone - still stands today. Burford was the birth-place of Winifred, whose father, a bell-founder, cast bells which can be heard today in Burford itself as well as Taynton, Bledington and Islip. Her mother, who celebrates her 101st birthday next month, lives in Kidlington.

In 50 years Leslie and Winifred have seen many changes in Fifield and they have some interesting photographs of festive occasions in the 19th century, when young and old gathered on the Green or at the Bowling Club. Winifred has written a poem to commemorate the destruction of 3 beautiful elm-trees which stood on the Green, known locally as "The Owl", "The Biggie" and "The Gillie".

"These trees stood many years proud and bold
Through Spring's pale green to Autumn's gold
They are now laid to rest by the workman's chore
Struck by the beetle as hundreds more."

The house next to their home was built in 1859 as a Primitive Methodist Chapel and is now the Village Hall. Just 100 years later another house was acquired for just 3s.6d.! It was offered as First Prize in a competition set by the 'Daily Herald', and the winner had to name the factors of House Safety in the right order.

Among Leslie's collection of pictures is one of a hurdle-maker's shop - one of the last in the County - and another of a fine wooden bridge spanning the land leading to the common land. It finally had to be removed because it was structurally unsound.

One of the Townsends' favourite stories concerns an elderly couple named Gee who lived in a thatched cottage by the roadside. One window overlooking the street was placed very low and some mischievous boys came along one night and white-washed it all over.

"There must have been a very heavy frost last night, Mother", old Mr Gee was heard to say, and it wasn't until the 'frost' was still there long after the sun had reached its zenith that he began to suspect something was wrong!

R.O.B. Long

GOLDEN WEDDING

Edward and Rona Twiggs will celebrate their Golden Wedding on 27 June 1981.

A Service will be held at Shipton Parish Church at 12 noon on Saturday 27 June. All are welcome.

R.N.L.I.

A Coffee Morning for the Royal National Lifeboat Institute will be held at the home of Edward and Rona Twiggs, Orchard Cottage, Court Close, Shipton on Saturday 25 April between 10.20 and noon.

Various stalls, gift, cake, bring and buy, produce.

Admission 20p